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## **SCHAKOWSKY INTRODUCES BILL TO END FUNDING OF SECRET WAR AND PRIVATE ARMIES IN ANDEAN REGION**

### **INFORMATION FROM CIA CONTRACT WORKERS RESULTED IN DEATH OF AMERICAN MISSIONARY OVER PERU**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today introduced the Andean Region Contractor Accountability Act (ARCAA), legislation that would prohibit the federal government from funding private armies in the Andean region. Currently, taxpayer funds are used to pay private companies millions of dollars to fight the war on drugs in the Andean region.

"The American taxpayers are funding a secret war that could suck us into a Vietnam-like conflict. Those private military contractors are not held accountable for their actions, and may draw the U.S. deeper into regional conflicts and civil wars," said Schakowsky, who toured Colombia earlier this year.

"The public has a right to know that the defense Department is outsourcing dangerous missions to private armies that operate free from public scrutiny. Is the U.S. military privatizing its missions in order to avoid public controversy or embarrassment? Is it to hide body bags from the media and thus shield them from public opinion?" Schakowsky added.

The bill specifically states that the U.S. government cannot enter into a contract with private organizations or individuals *"to carry out military, law enforcement, armed rescue, or other related operations in the countries of the Andean region, including any operations relating to narcotics control efforts."*

This bill would not hinder humanitarian activities or aid. Currently, private companies are being paid by the federal government to pilot drug-crop fumigation aircraft, fly helicopters transporting Colombian army battalions, gather aerial intelligence and perform armed search and rescue missions.

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Schakowsky said that with the presence of private armies and contractors, the potential for an escalation of a larger conflict exists today in the region, particularly in Colombia where private military personnel have been involved in direct fire fights with rebel forces. She also pointed to the recent incident in Peru where the action of unnamed CIA contractors resulted in the murder of an American missionary and her baby daughter.

The bill is cosponsored by Representatives Cynthia McKinney (D-GA) and Jim McGovern (D-MA)